



November 29, 2011

Michigan Senate Transportation Committee
Lansing, MI

Re: MEC Supports SB 819 and SB 820 - Reduced Idling Legislation

Dear Senators:

The Michigan Environmental Council is a coalition of 70 environmental, conservation, public health and faith-based organizations located across Michigan. These organizations place a high priority on transportation issues, and particularly issues affecting the state's air quality, as key to Michigan's economic success and environmental sustainability.

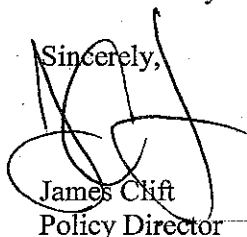
The Michigan Environmental Council supports SB 819 and SB 820 which would bring consistency across the state regarding anti-idling ordinances and allow more citizens access to cleaner air. In short, SB 819 and SB 820 would lead to decreased diesel emissions and less particulate matter in the air. The bills would prohibit vehicles weighing over 8,500 lbs (for comparison, a Ford F-150 pickup truck weighs 4,685 lbs) from idling for more than five minutes in any 60-minute period, with exceptions. These bills allow flexibility, exempting emergency vehicles, armored vehicles, agricultural vehicles (not included in "vehicle" definition) and other vehicles in reasonable circumstances.

Large trucks, and particularly diesel-fueled large trucks, degrade air quality especially when idling. Diesel exhaust contains significant levels of fine particulate matter. When a diesel (or gas) engine idles, it operates at its most inefficient, burning more fuel and emitting more fine particulate matter. Fine particulate matter is dangerous because it can travel through the nose and mouth and become lodged in a person's lungs. This can aggravate respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis and lead to premature death in extreme cases.

MEC, therefore, supports the passage of SB 819 and SB 820 as a way to provide a measure of reduced fine particulate matter and cleaner air.

Thank you for the opportunity to raise our concerns about these bills. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments regarding our position on this matter.

Sincerely,



James Clift
Policy Director